

homework 2

Semantics 3, UCLA Linguistics

due April 11, 2022

Let's consider a version of English in which both sentences in (1) are acceptable/grammatical.

- (1) a. The committee met in the conference room. It voted on the new procedure.
 b. The committee met in the new conference room. They voted on the new procedure.

- A. How would you informally characterize the difference in pronominal reference between (a) and (b)?
B. Choose your favorite formal theory of plurals. Talk about what type of semantic object you think each would refer to (in order to support your characterization in A).

Here's what happens when we start messing around with the verbal predicate:

- (2) a. The committee gathered in the conference room. {It/They} voted on the new procedure.
 b. The committee met {each other/one another} in the conference room. {*It / They} voted on the new procedure.

C. There's an asymmetry here... how would you characterize it, empirically?
D. What sorts of things would you do to supplement or change your semantic theory from B (if necessary) to account for this new empirical generalization?

Bonus exercise: Consider the coordinated sentence below.

- (3) The committee formed a circle and met one another (in the process).

E. A common assumption in semantics ('Generalized Conjunction') is that coordinators can only coordinate two things of the same type. Is (3) something you could predict in your approach above, given Generalized Conjunction? Why or why not?
-

Credit where credit is due: **Group terms**

Pearson, Hazel. 2011. A New Semantics for Group Nouns. In the *Proceedings of the 28th West Coast Conference on Formal Linguistics*, 160-168.

Ritchie, Kate. 2017. Plural and collective noun phrases. *Routledge Handbook on Collective Intentionality*, 464-475.